

## 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on **Medicine and Surgery**

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### **Self-care is a MUST for health care providers caring for the dying**

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Death is a daily experience for us as palliative care providers. Every loss is cumulative, and can be overwhelming, as we too experience grief. In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the burden of witnessing an increased number of dying patients, along with the challenges of caring for these patients without their loved ones present at their besides, often feels overwhelming. While witnessing recurrent loss of life daily, we need to be reminded that we are still living.

Our organization acknowledges that staff may experience elevated levels of distress in their workplace even more so now during the current global pandemic climate, and regularly circulates resources and practical tools, including information on peer support groups, mindfulness groups, and one-on-one support sessions. We must also consider how we, individually, support ourselves outside of our organizations and find ways to grieve and process the losses and suffering we encounter each day.

The co- presenters will offer their own self-care strategies including daily meditation and weekly religious practice. Daily meditation provides a space for holding and feeling suffering and moving through thoughts and feelings with empathy and compassion and without judgment or attachment. Weekly religious services, even attended remotely, provide strength to venerate for the daily gifts that are bestowed upon us and allow us to reflect on encounters with patients who have passed away and our feelings around our role in their care.

We encourage all those that are in practice to embrace their own self-care plan to mitigate the effects of burnout, compassion fatigue, and moral distress. We owe it to ourselves, to our families and loved ones, and to the patients for whom we care, to find ways to nurture and restore ourselves. Even during a global pandemic, there is no time like the present.